


Free Online Libraries

Educators should check before purchasing an e-book to see if that book is available for free elsewhere. A large number of classic books, pre-1920s, have passed into the public domain and are available for download from one of the free online libraries. Online libraries include the Internet Public Library (www.ipl.org), Florida Electronic Library (www.flelibrary.org), Blackmask Online (www.blackmask.com), and Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org), which is the oldest of the online book repositories. Gutenberg has more than 10,000 copyright-free publications, from the library's first e-book, *Alice in Wonderland*, to the *Human Genome Project*. The University of Virginia Library (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>) claims to have more than 50,000 electronic texts, distributing on average 9,000 e-books per day. Some of the online libraries store and distribute books in multiple formats, and some have special collections aimed at specific languages, content areas, or age groups.

As of 2004, the Million Book Project had digitized more than 80,000 free e-books. There are literally thousands of e-books available online for free along with thousands more for sale. Sometimes finding appropriate and useful texts can be difficult, but an analysis that I did comparing online resource libraries with reading lists for several states shows that many books required for the classroom are housed online in digital format and available for free.

Elementary E-book Resources

The following digital library and resource sites provide e-books that meet many of the needs of elementary classrooms. Sites such as the Internet Public Library KidSpace (Figure 9.1) host picture books, read-aloud books, short stories, and chapter books. While most of the sites have e-books designed to be downloaded or read online, some have books that can be printed. In some cases the reading materials are already leveled, such as at Reading A–Z and childrenselibrary.com. These resources provide students with access to a wide range of books at all levels.

NOTE: The icon  indicates that the library has an audio version or support.

Aesop's Fables: www.umass.edu/aesop/contents.html

Fables in traditional and modern forms, most in HTML with some in Flash.



Amazing Adventure Series: www.amazingadventure.com

Children's stories that can be read on the screen or read aloud in Flash format.

arts-entertainment-recreation.com: www.arts-entertainment-recreation.com/Arts/

Literature/Children's_Literature/Online_Books/

Links to a variety of online children's books.

BAB Books: www.sundhagen.com/babbooks/

More than 12 online HTML picture books.



BookPALS (Performing Artists for Literacy in Schools): www.bookpals.net/storyline/

Stories read by members of the Screen Actors Guild (and others). Stories are read and displayed in a video screen (Windows Media, Real, and QuickTime). An additional story is available by phone from www.bookpals.net/storyline/phone.html.

Book-Pop: www.bookpop.com/bookpop.html

HTML picture books with the option to have the book read aloud.

byGosh.com: www.bygosh.com
Children's classics in HTML format.



Candlelight Stories: www.candlelightstories.com/HelpOFoodMem.htm
Children's and chapter books in a variety of formats.

Children's Books Online, the Rosetta Project (formerly Editec Communications' Children's Books for Free Library): www.childrensbooksonline.org
Site hosts 1,200 HTML children's books first published in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

childrenselibrary.com: www.childrenselibrary.com
An online bookstore for teachers and schools, this company offers a 30-day trial program to allow teachers to download and use e-books with their classes (LIT).

Children's Storybooks Online: www.magickeys.com/books/
Illustrated children's stories in HTML.

Class Conscious Big Books: www.classconsciousbooks.com/bigbooks.html
Young children's stories, HTML format.



Clifford's Interactive Storybooks: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/clifford1/>
Interactive stories about Clifford the Big Red Dog in Flash format, presented by Scholastic.

E-book Libraries: www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/ebook_libraries.htm#ChildrensLibraries
A master list with links of online libraries useful for educators, including children's books.

Florida Electronic Library: www.flelibrary.org
Public online library with magazines, newspapers, books, documents, and more (HTML and PDF).

International Children's Digital Library (ICDL): www.icdlbooks.org
The ICDL is building an international collection that reflects both the diversity and quality of children's literature from 27 cultures in 23 languages (HTML).

Internet Public Library KidSpace: www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/
This section of IPL contains The Reading Zone, which is similar to the fiction section at a public library. There are links to online stories and links to information about favorite books and authors.



Mighty Book Catalogue: www.mightybook.com/catalogue.htm
More than 50 children's books for ages 2 through preteen in HTML. Books will read aloud.



NASA Books

- Online stories *Echo the Bat* and *Amelia the Pigeon* (HTML): <http://imagers.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- *Robin Whirlybird on her Rotorcraft Adventures* (HTML): <http://rotored.arc.nasa.gov>
A story and activities about a girl visiting her mother's work in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

- *Our Very Own Star and Auroras!* (Flash format): <http://stargazer.gsfc.nasa.gov/epo/jsp/products.jsp>

Reader's Theater Editions: www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html

A collection of free scripts for reader's theater, adapted from stories by Aaron Shepard and others.

Reader's Theater Scripts and Plays: www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm

Links to more than 50 reader's theater scripts on the Web.



Reading A-Z: www.readinga-z.com

An online bookseller of leveled books to print. Sample books are available (PDF).

RIF Reading Planet: www.rif.org/readingplanet/content/read_aloud_stories.msp

A collection of read-aloud books that changes monthly (Flash format).

Sebastian Swan's Infant Explorer: www.naturegrid.org.uk/infant/

Eight big books in HTML.

Stories from Indonesia: www.geocities.com/kesumawijaya/

Seven HTML text stories.

StoryPlace: www.storyplace.org

More than 20 stories for elementary children along with suggested readings and print out activities.

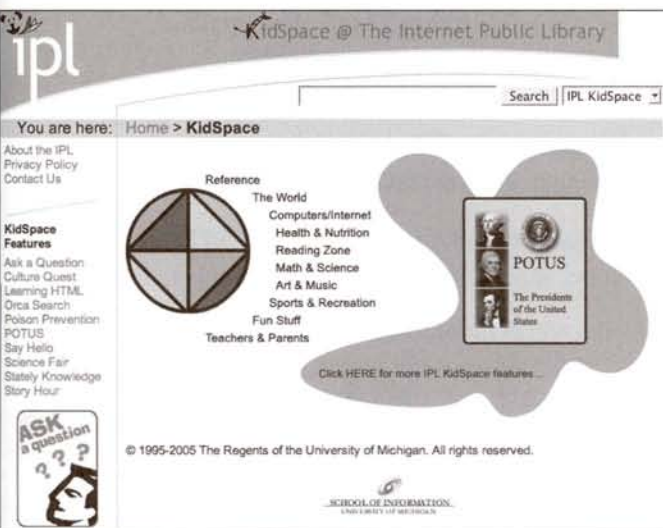
Tales of Wonder: www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/index.html

Folk and fairy tales from around the world in HTML.

United States of America's Korean War Commemoration: <http://korea50.army.mil/teachers/index.shtml>

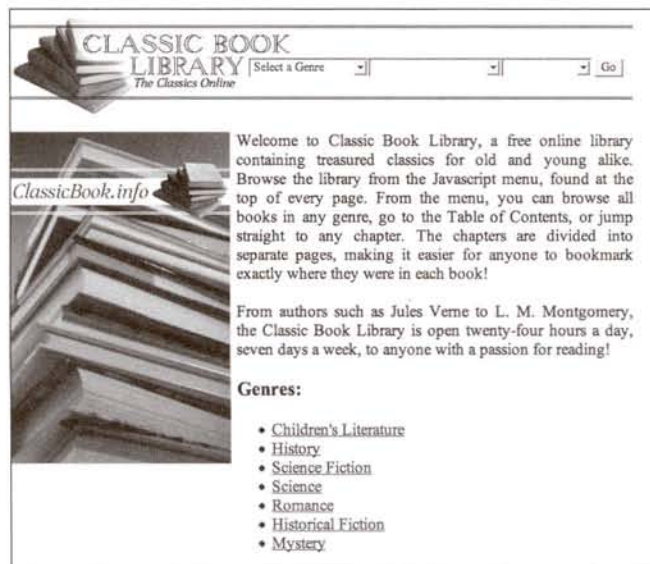
Two online picture books (HTML).

Figure 9.1. The Internet Public Library provides a children's section named KidSpace.




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Figure 9.2. The Classic Book Library hosts more than 125 free e-books of classic material.



Secondary and General E-book Resources

Educators will find a wide range of secondary and general e-book resources online, including references, modern publications, and public domain books many of which are considered classic. The Classic Book Library, for instance, hosts more than 125 free e-books of classic material (Figure 9.2). As a general rule, almost everything published in the United States since 1923 is subject to copyright restrictions, while nearly everything published before 1923 is in the public domain. In addition to public domain books, some libraries, such as Bartleby.com (Figure 9.3) and the Baen Free Library, make available a large number of copyrighted books as part of their free online collections.

NOTE: The icon  indicates that the library has an audio version or support.

Abacci Books: www.abacci.com/books/default.asp

Digital text versions of classic literature with reviews from Amazon (TXT and LIT).

Alex Catalog of Electronic Texts: <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/alex> or www.infomotions.com/alex/

A catalog with roughly 2,000 links to e-texts, located on various servers.

American Library Association: www.ala.org/parentspage/greatsites/lit.html

More than 700 sites for children covering literature and language.

Aportis Library: www.aportis.com/library/index.html

More than 5,000 "AportisDoc" or DOC format files.

Audio Books for Free: www.audiobooksforfree.com

More than 300 audio books (as MP3 files) available for free download.

Baen Free Library: www.baen.com/library/

More than 50 recent science fiction books in MS Reader, eReader, Rocket, and RTF formats.

Bartleby.com: www.bartleby.com

Classic books and references in HTML.

Bibliomania: www.bibliomania.com

More than 2,000 texts of classic literature, book notes, references, and resources in HTML.

Blackmask Online: www.blackmask.com
More than 10,000 texts in a variety of formats, including LIT, HTML, and PDS.

BookRags: www.bookrags.com
Book notes and more than 1,500 novels (HTML).

Books2GoLibrary.com: www.books2golibrary.com/e-books_free.html
E-books for eReader, Pocket PC, and desktop PC.

CIA Publication Library: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/index.html
Hosts the World Factbook with information on every country in the world.

Classic Book Library: <http://classicbook.info/index.html>
More than 125 books in seven genres done in HTML page-by-page format.

Digital Text Project: www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/digitext.html
Links to works by famous philosophers.

DotLit: www.dotlit.com
Hosts only LIT files for MS Reader.

Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia Library: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>
Thousands of XML, HTML, MS Reader, and eReader texts.

Elegant Solutions Software Company: <http://esspc-ebooks.com/default.htm>
MS Reader books in a variety of genres.

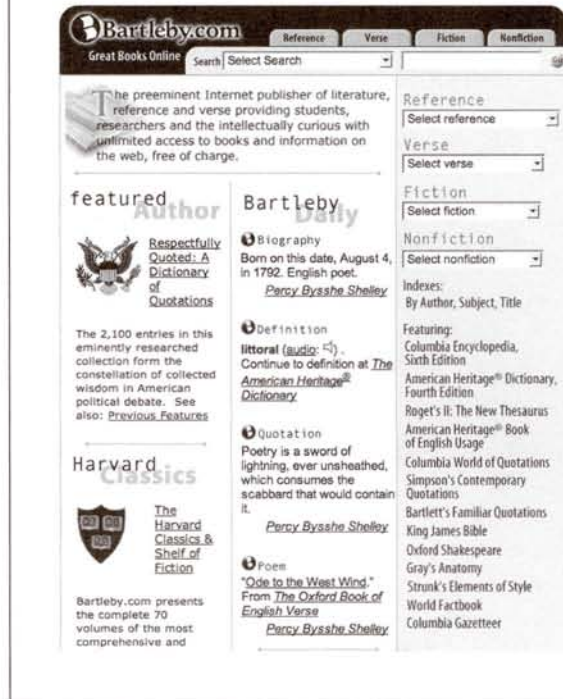
The English Server's Fiction Collection: <http://eserver.org/fiction/>
Works of and about fiction.

Florida Electronic Library: www.flelibrary.org
Public online library with magazines, newspapers, books, documents, and more (HTML and PDF).

The Franklin Free Library: www.franklin.com/freelibrary/
More than 1,000 TXT and HTML files.

FreE-books.org: www.freebooks.org
Lots of books in both TXT and MP3 formats.

Figure 9.3. Bartleby.com provides classics and reference books.



Internet Public Library: www.ipl.org/div/books

Links to more than 40,000 titles.



LiteralSystems.org: <http://literalsystems.org/files/>

More than 45 audio e-books of classic literature and poetry.

Litrix Reading Room: www.litrix.com/readroom.htm

More than 300 public domain titles in HTML chapter format.

Making of America: <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>

Cornell University Library created this digital library of primary sources in American social history (antebellum through reconstruction periods). This is a full text/image journal site of 22 magazines from the 1830s to the 1900s.

manybooks.net: <http://manybooks.net/>

More than 10,000 eReader, Pocket PC, Zaurus, Rocket, and PDA e-books.

National Academies Press: www.nap.edu

Search and read the full text of this publisher's digitized books on various topics.

On-Line Books: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

More than 15,000 listings, most in TXT format.

Page-by-Page Books: www.pagebypagebooks.com

More than 400 books to be read online (HTML).

PocketRocketFX.com: www.pocketrocketfx.com/html/ebooks.htm

Classics library in MS Reader format.



Project Gutenberg: <http://promo.net/pg/>

Oldest online library, E-books are usually TXT only, but some are offered in multiple formats including audio.

Read Print: www.readprint.com

Thousands of books for students, teachers, and the classic enthusiast in HTML.

WebBooks.com: www.Web-books.com/default.htm

More than 1,000 classic texts usually in MS Reader format.



Wired for Books: www.wiredforbooks.org

Collections of audio books and interviews. Contains full versions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and Beatrix Potter stories along with short stories and excerpts from other books (RealPlayer).

World eBook Library: <http://netlibrary.net/WorldHome.html>

More than 27,000 free e-books in HTML format.

Special Collections

The online public domain libraries can provide teachers and students with access to books that would otherwise be unavailable. A number of online libraries now house and distribute works that are no longer in print, and some have special collections, such as the African American collection by and about African Americans at the University of Virginia Library and the censorship collection at Banned Books Online, hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Library (Figure 9.4).

Figure 9.4. Banned Books Online is a special collection of e-books that have been censored in the past.

The Online Books Page

presents

BANNED BOOKS ONLINE

Welcome to this special exhibit of books that have been the objects of censorship or censorship attempts. The books featured here, ranging from *Ulysses* to *Little Red Riding Hood*, have been selected from the indexes of [The Online Books Page](#). (See that page for over 20,000 more online books!)

This page is a work in progress, and more works may be added to this page over time. Please inform onlinebooks@pobox.upenn.edu of any new material that can be included here. Note that the listings are meant to be representative rather than exhaustive. Also, many recent books that have been banned or challenged have not been included here, because they have not been made available online. (But see [below](#)).



Books Suppressed or Censored by Legal Authorities

Ulysses by James Joyce was selected by the Modern Library as the best novel of the 20th century, and has received wide praise from other literature scholars, including those who have defended online censorship. (Carnegie Mellon English professor and vice-provost Erwin Steinberg, who praised the book in 1994, also defended CMU's declaration that year to delete alt.sex and some 80 other newsgroups, claiming they were legally obligated to do so.) *Ulysses* was barred from the United States as obscene for 15 years, and was seized by U.S. Postal Authorities in 1918 and 1930. The lifting of the ban in 1933 came only after advocates fought for the right to publish the book.

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E-book Collections

(Also see the content area e-book lists in chapter 4.)

African American: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/African-American.html>
E-books by and about African Americans.

Andamooka: www.andamooka.org/reader.pl
Technology and computer e-books.

Banned Books Online: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/banned-books.html>
An exhibit of books that have been subjected to censorship or censorship attempts.

Christmas Stories: www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/christmas.html
More than 25 stories of Christmas.

Figure 9.5. BookRags is an online literature resource with study guides.



Digital Math Archive: <http://sunsite.ubc.ca/DigitalMathArchive/>
Collection of mathematical sources, focusing on documents from the late 19th century through the present.

E-Asia digital library: <http://e-asia.uoregon.edu>
More than 1,000 e-books on China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

Florida Heritage Collection: <http://susdl.fcla.edu/fh/>
Materials representing Florida's history, culture, art, literature, and science.

Library of Southern Literature: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/>
Wide range of literary works from the American South published before 1924.

Native American: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/Native-American.html>
E-books by and about Native Americans.

Victorian Women Writers Project: www.indiana.edu/~lettrs/vwwp/
Transcriptions of works by British women writers of the 19th century.

Women Writers: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/Women-Writers.html>
E-books by women writers.

Book Notes and Study Guides

BookRags: www.bookrags.com
Book notes and more than 1,500 novels in HTML (Figure 9.5).

Owleyes: www.owleyes.org
Offers help with understanding and writing about 12 famous literary works.

SparkNotes: www.sparknotes.com
SparkNotes (like Cliff Notes) offers help in understanding literature.

Other E-books

Artbomb.net: www.artbomb.net/comics.jsp#
Hosts five graphic novels.

Comics.com: www.unitedmedia.com/categories/index.html
More than 88 newspaper comic strips archived for the last 30 days.

King Features: www.kingfeatures.com/features/comics/comics.htm
More than 60 newspaper comic strips with a 30-day archive.

Newspapers on the Internet: www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/info/Newspapers.html
Listing of newspapers from around the world that can be read online.

Slate: <http://slate.msn.com/>

An online magazine that is also published as an e-book.

UComics.com: www.ucomics.com/comics/

More than 60 daily newspaper comic strips.

Teacher E-books

Some libraries and e-books are made just for teachers. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) hosts a teacher library with six books on classroom management and instruction that can be read online. The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) has an excellent online book, *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age* (Figure 9.6), with resource hyperlinks, extra activities, background research, and more. The National Academies Press has more than 2,000 texts available for online reading in a variety of areas, including more than 200 books in education—one is the educational bestseller *How People Learn*. It's even possible to find educational classics such as John Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, which can be downloaded in multiple formats from the Blackmask Online library.

ASCD Full-Text Books:

[www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?](http://www.ascd.org/cms/index.cfm?TheViewID=652)

TheViewID=652

Six complete books on education and educational issues.

Blackmask Online:

www.blackmask.com

A user-supported library of texts in categories ranging from biography to poetry to nonfiction.

CAST: www.cast.org/products/

Two universal access/technology education books with only the text of the book online, but also enriched with multimedia examples of UDL as well as a number of interactive tutorials, tools, and templates. The books are *Learning to Read in the Computer Age* and *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age*.

National Academies Press: www.nap.edu/browse.html

More than 2,000 professional books (including an education section) that can be read online, including *How People Learn*.

National Institute for Literacy: www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications.html

Online books about reading, including *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*.

Figure 9.6. CAST's *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age* online e-book has resource hyperlinks, extra activities, and background research.



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Figure 9.7. eBookLocator is a specialized e-book search engine.

eBookLocator
Want to have your digital book listed in eBookLocator? Click here!

Welcome to eBookLocator, where you can search through a database of thousands of digital books available at leading retail sites and public library sites. It's fun, it's fast, and it's FREE! Now with digital audio books, which will soon be available for retail sale!

Digital Book Format: View All

Title:

Author/Creator:

Subject: View All

Keyword:

Publisher: View All

Identifier (ISBN, DOI, etc.):

Search Reset

Top 5 Best-Selling Digital Books for July 2005

1. Embers Falling on Dry Grass by Robert Jordan Simon & Schuster
2. It's in His Kiss by Julie Quinn HarperCollins
3. Every Which Way But Dead by Kim Harrison HarperCollins
4. A Perfect Hero by Samantha James HarperCollins
5. Paragon Lost by Dave Duncan HarperCollins

Featured Retailer
CONTENTLINK

Featured Publisher
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Top Picks

1. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams
2. Wenning by Jack Welch, Suzy Welch
3. White Hot by Sandra Brown

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Search Tools

If the previous lists of electronic libraries don't have what you want, you can also look for e-books using specialized e-book search engines, such as the eBookLocator (Figure 9.7) and the Online Books Page, as well as general search engines, such as MSN and Yahoo. Search engines can find e-books on Web sites that have only one or two e-books for distribution and may not be associated with an online library. The Google search engine has started scanning millions of books and periodicals from libraries, such as the New York Public Library and the Harvard, University of Michigan, and Oxford libraries, into an e-book collection called Google Print. During any search, the Google search engine may

identify a book that fits within the given search parameter. The book will be identified by a book icon in the search results. By clicking on the link, a searcher will have access to the book. In the case of copyrighted works, access will be limited to an abstract or a single page. If the work is in the public domain, the entire work will be accessible.

Specialized E-book Search Engines

Digital Book Index: www.digitalbookindex.com/search001a.htm

This indexes most major e-book sites, along with thousands of smaller specialized sites.

eBookLocator: www.ebooklocator.com

Search database of thousands of books.

Google Books: <http://print.google.com>

This is a Google digitized book service.

Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com/>

Google provides this tool to search scholarly papers.

The Online Books Page: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

Search from more than 20,000 listings.

SearcheBooks: www.searchebooks.com

Searche-books searches multiple full textbook sites.

General Search Engines

Google: www.google.com

MSN Search: <http://search.msn.com>

Yahoo: www.yahoo.com

Conducting a Readability Analysis

Once a teacher has found e-books to use in class, he or she may wish to determine the reading level of the material to assess its appropriateness for the students. Readability is especially important for struggling readers, according to Allington (2001). There should be a correlation between the student's reading level and the book's readability level. Eighty percent of a student's books should be at a level that the student can read independently, meaning one or two grades below the student's tested level, and 20% should be at instructional level, the student's current tested reading level.

Figure 9.8. Textalyser is a readability analysis tool.

[Français](#) [Contact/Suggestions](#) [Make a link](#)

Textalyser

Welcome to the online text analysis tool, the detailed statistics of your text, perfect for translators (quoting), for webmasters (ranking) or for normal users, to know the subject of a text. Now with new features as the anlysis of words groups, finding out the keyword density, analyse the prominence of word or expressions. Webmasters can analyse the links on their pages. More instructions are about to be written, please send us your feedback !

Enter your text to analyze here : _____

or analyze a website :

Analysis options :

Minimum characters per word :	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Special word or expression to analyze :	<input type="text"/>
Number of words to be analyzed :	<input type="text" value="10"/>
Ignore numbers :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Log the query (only for websites) :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Apply stoplist :	<input type="text" value="English"/>
Apply own stoplist (separe with blanks) :	<input type="text"/>
Make a link analysis :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Exhaustive polyword phrases :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Readability can be assessed with a readily available computer analysis. Electronic text and e-books are easily analyzed for readability because the text can be dragged and dropped into a readability program. Educators can analyze a portion of an e-book or even an entire e-book. Some great tools are Using English.com, OKAPI!, and Textalyser (Figure 9.8).

Educators can use readability statistics to track student growth in reading. Some readability tools will determine a grade level for the material. Using these methods educators can collect banks of e-books and articles appropriate for student use.

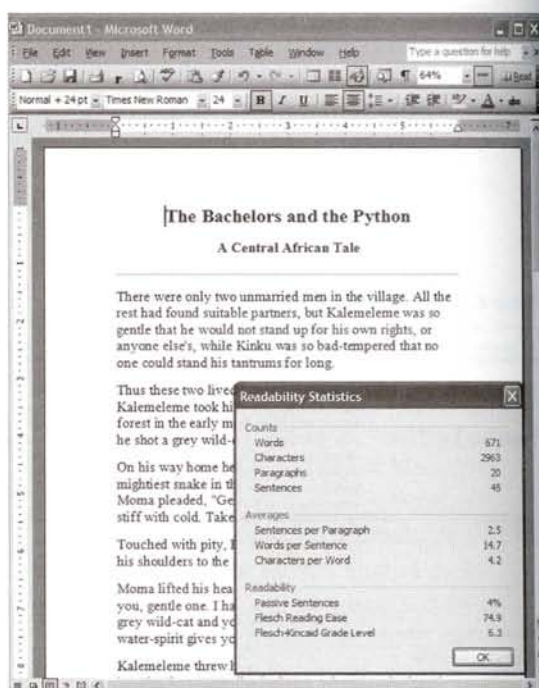
Microsoft Word's Readability Statistics Analyzer

Many are unaware that Microsoft Word has a readability statistics analyzer built into the word processor. Word will analyze written material using the Flesch-Kincaid model, which provides a grade level between 0 and 12 and reading ease between 0% and 100% (Figure 9.9). The Flesch Reading Ease calculation rates the document's text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, people aim for a score of approximately 60% to 70%.

To complete a readability analysis on an e-book using Word, select an online e-book in HTML or text format and open it in Word. Or, highlight portions of an e-book or article, copy it, and paste it into a blank Word document. Now that the text is in Word, make sure the readability function is turned on. To do this, follow these steps:

1. On the **Tools** menu, select the **Spelling and Grammar** tab.
2. Make sure that the **Check grammar** box is checked.
3. Select Options, then select the **Show readability statistics** check box. Click **OK**.
4. Now run a spelling and grammar check on the document.
5. From this point on, every time spelling and grammar are checked, Word will also display the readability statistics of the document.

Figure 9.9. MS Word analyzes the readability of the Central African folktale *The Bachelors and the Python*, using the Flesch-Kincaid model.



Following is a real-life example of how useful readability statistics can be.

In the Classroom

Mr. Deneb's middle school team has decided that all teachers will include narrative story reading in their classes. Mr. Deneb is currently teaching about world biomes, so he wants to include high-interest stories about animals to supplement the current course work. He decides to use the Tales of Wonder site (www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/index.html), which has folk tales from 14 regions around the world. The tales include a number of animal stories.

The site has a section of stories from central Africa, which feature the tropical savanna biome. Mr. Deneb reads through a few of the stories and selects an interesting story that mentions climate elements. Since the stories are short, he highlights the entire story, copies it, and pastes it into a blank Word document. Then he runs a spelling and grammar check on the document. When it is complete, he gets a pop-up window with the story's readability statistics (Figure 9.9).

Mr. Deneb finds that the reading level of the story *The Bachelors and the Python* is relatively close to his students' grade level, with a Flesch-Kincaid score of 6.3 (meaning three months into the sixth grade) and a Flesch Reading Ease of 74.9 (meaning a relatively easy read). Mr. Deneb also works with the team's social studies teacher, sharing the site with her and planning when the stories will be read, so that the social studies teacher can teach about the culture of the region from which the story comes.

Text Analysis Tools

OKAPI!: www.interventioncentral.org/htmldocs/tools/okapi/okapi.shtml
OKAPI! performs Dale-Chall or Spache readability analyses or creates curriculum-based assessment probes.

Readability Test: www.juicystudio.com/fog/
This site calculates the Gunning Fog Index, Flesch Reading Ease, and Flesch-Kincaid for HTML files.

Textalyser: <http://textalyser.net/>
Textalyser calculates the Gunning Fog Index and lexical density.

Text Content Analysis Tool:
www.usingenglish.com/resources/text-statistics.php
This site calculates the Gunning Fog Index and lexical density.

Using English.com: www.usingenglish.com/resources/text-statistics.php
Statistics provided include word count, unique words, number of sentences, average words per sentence, lexical density, and the Gunning Fog Index.

[Lesson Idea]

Reading Assessment

From an e-book, select reading passages to use as a reading assessment (up to 170 words). Copy the passage and go to the OKAPI! site (www.interventioncentral.org/htmldocs/tools/okapi/okapi.shtml) to create a curriculum-based reading probe. Have the student read the analyzed pages aloud for one minute to find the number of words read correct. This is a highly reliable measure of general reading achievement.

Conclusion

With thousands of e-books available in so many formats on so many subjects, the odds are good that educators will find e-books for their students. Make sure to browse the various stores and libraries to find something for your students to read or use as a reference.

Reference

Allington, R. (2001). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs*. New York: Longman.